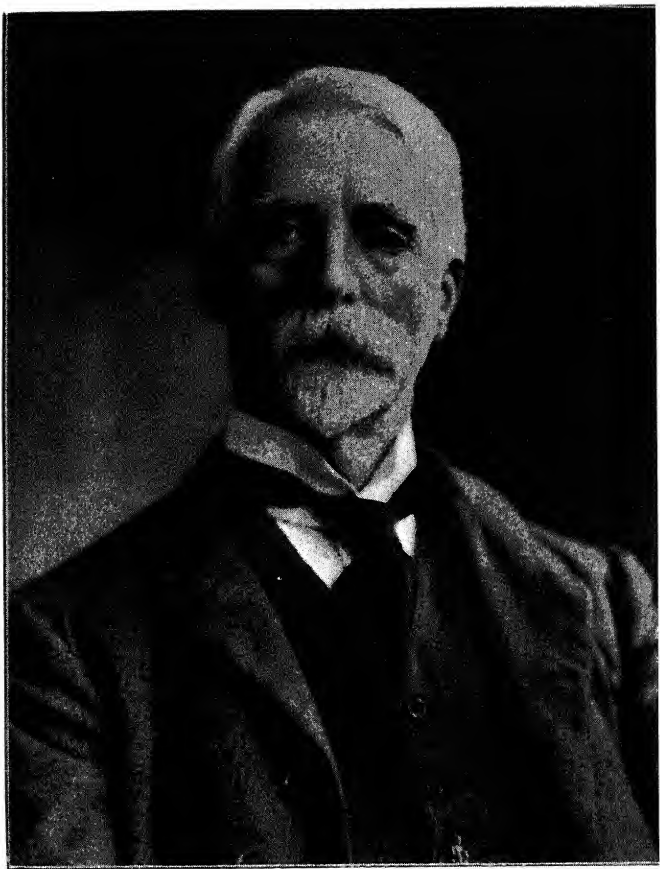


which in respect to nature are nowhere and at no time. The dating of the dream is the correlation of the process of the apprehending consciousness with the space-time of nature. But, in respect to the matter of the dream, fortunately there is no region of nature which was the field of those awful events. Let it be noted that the new relativity doctrine has a vital connexion with the theory of dreams. According to the older views it was open for an objector to say that the dream-date of the dream-events was the real time of night as correlated with the process of consciousness, but that the dream-space and its dream-contents were imaginary. But space and time have now been assimilated, so that you cannot tear them apart. Accordingly, when the dream-space is assigned to an imaginary world, so is the dream-time. It therefore becomes necessary to distinguish between the process of apprehension and the apprehended process.

The distinction between the dream-world and nature is, that the space-time of the dream-world cannot conjoin with the scheme of the space-time of nature, as constituted by any part of nature. The dream-world is nowhere at no time, though it has a dream-time and a dream-space of its own. We may ask anyone who, in contradiction to this doctrine, maintains the contingency of space-time relations, untempered by any uniformity imposed by any single part or region, how the dreams are to be discriminated from natural occurrences. The course of nature is entirely contingent, since Hume's doctrine merely explains the growth of our expectation and has no reference to the actual course of nature in the future. Suppose that one morning you wake up in your bedroom, having dreamt that you were tossed by a bull. You know that it was a dream, because here you are, safe in bed, and you dined and went to bed quietly last night. Also you recollect that, when you went to bed, you had not been tossed by a bull. Accordingly it must have happened during the night. Why should it not have happened just as really as your dinner or breakfast? There is



Yours sincerely
Bernard Bosanquet

From a photograph of Mr. Bernard Bosanquet taken in 1902 in his 61st year.

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PAPERS READ BEFORE THE SOCIETY.

1922-1923.

*Meeting of the Aristotelian Society at 21, Gower Street, London,
W.C. 1, on November 6th, 1922, at 8 P.M.*

I.—UNIFORMITY AND CONTINGENCY.

THE PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS.

By A. N. WHITEHEAD.

THE subject matter which I propose to consider in this address is a well-worn theme of philosophy, and I cannot hope in any essential way to remove the difficulties which encompass it. My endeavour will be merely to restate the problem with attention to distinctions and discriminations which are sometimes insufficiently emphasized.

The general problem is to examine, whether any isolated portion of our experience has any character which of itself implies a corresponding character, extending beyond the domain of that immediate example. In other words, we ask whether, on the ground of experience, we can deduce any systematic uniformity, extending throughout any types of entities, or throughout the relations between them. Where uniformity ends, contingency commences. The whole subject has been discussed by Hume in his *Philosophical Essays concerning Human Understanding*, with a clarity which constitutes his investigations a classic locus, from which all subsequent discussion must start. In order to get the discussion under way, I will start with some quotations from Hume:—

“An annalist or historian, who should undertake to write the history of Europe during any century, would be influenced

by the connexion of contiguity in time and place. All events, which happen in that portion of space, and period of time, are comprehended in his design, tho' in other respects different and unconnected. They have still a species of unity, amidst all their diversity" (Essay III, of the *Association of Ideas*).

"'Tis universally allowed by modern enquirers, that all the sensible qualities of objects, such as hard, soft, hot, cold, white, black, etc., are merely secondary and exist not in the objects themselves, but are perceptions of the mind, without any external archetype or model which they represent. If this be allowed, with regard to secondary qualities, it must also follow with regard to the supposed primary qualities of extension and solidity; nor can the latter be any more entitled to that denomination than the former. The idea of extension is entirely acquired from the senses of sight and feeling; and if all the qualities, perceived by the senses, be in the mind not in the object, the same conclusion must reach the idea of extension, which is wholly dependent on the sensible ideas or the ideas of secondary qualities" (Essay XII, of the *Academic or Sceptical Philosophy*).

I wonder whether this was one of the passages which awoke Kant from his dogmatic slumber. He certainly accepts the argument by his doctrine of space and time as forms of intuition.

Hume accepts, without question, space and time as reigning throughout nature. It is in fact the very basis of his celebrated analysis of the idea of necessary connexion amongst events. He says: "It appears, then, that this idea of necessary connexion amongst events arises from a number of similar instances, which occur, of the constant conjunction of these events, nor can that idea ever be suggested by any one of these instances, surveyed in all possible lights and positions. But there is nothing in a number of instances, different from every single instance, which is supposed to be exactly similar; except only, that after a repetition of similar instances,

the mind is carried by habit, upon the appearance of one event, to expect its usual attendant and to believe, that it will exist.

"This connexion, therefore, which we *feel* in the mind, or customary transitive of the imagination from one object to its usual attendant, is the sentiment or impression, from which we form the idea of power or necessary connexion" (Essay VII, of the *Idea of Necessary Connexion*).

You will notice that in this passage "the constant conjunction" of events and the "attendance" of one event on another must mean spatio-temporal contiguity, or else the whole point of his explanation of the idea of causation is lost. Accordingly the spatio-temporal character of nature is a presupposition of Hume's philosophy. I am not making any objection to Hume's assumption: far from it, I am claiming his support. What Hume says of the history of Europe is true of any set of events. "They have still a species of unity, amidst all their diversity." They obtain this "species of unity" in virtue of their joint inclusion within some definite four-dimensional region of space and time.

I ask now, on what basis do we ground the assumption of the spatio-temporality of nature? The presupposition stands on a different basis to contingent occurrences. If time and space cease to be, there is a rupture in the texture of experience; but when the Campanile in Venice collapsed, the incident was unexpected and regrettable, but did not otherwise affect the intrinsic character of things observed. The status of space and time is in some way different from that of the Campanile.

In the absence of space-time there may still be consciousness aware of the truths of pure mathematics. It so happens that in fact we contemplate these mathematical truths in a temporal succession. But this order of precedence in our consideration of mathematics seems casual and irrelevant, so that we can easily imagine a timeless mathematical knowledge. In the same way the idea of a spaceless mathematical know-

ledge presents no difficulty ; and mathematics, as thus known, would even contain the science of pure geometry, viewed as an abstract mathematical subject. Accordingly we cannot maintain that knowledge in itself requires space-time, either as conditioning the mode of consciousness, or as an essential system of relations interconnecting the things known.

Again we cannot maintain that the mode of apprehension, in consciousness, of a spatio-temporal nature requires that the mode itself should include temporal transition. In other words, the fact, that nature is a process, does not require that consciousness of nature should be a process. For the moment of consciousness involves a specious present in which there are antecedents and consequents. Accordingly, such process as in fact does attach to consciousness is not the necessary consequence of the apprehension of process. For if this were the case, the suspension (relatively to the process of nature) of the process of consciousness, so as to include the specious present in immediate apprehension, would be impossible ; consciousness would have to put the past behind it, in step with nature.

Accordingly, by an indefinite enlargement of the specious present, we can imagine an awareness of all nature as a process, although no process is implicated in the mode-of-awareness. Accordingly we can dismiss the process of consciousness as irrelevant to the immediate enquiry, and can concentrate on the fact, that nature, as apprehended in consciousness, is constituted as a process, and that the analysis of this constitution is expressed by the properties of space-time.

The peculiarity of the space-time process is, that any part of it establishes the whole scheme within which the remainder is set. We can imagine that, in the realm of existence, there may be an alternative space-time process other than that of nature ; but nature and the alternative process do not conjoin to make one process. In fact we are aware of such alternative processes in dreams, where we apprehend a process of events